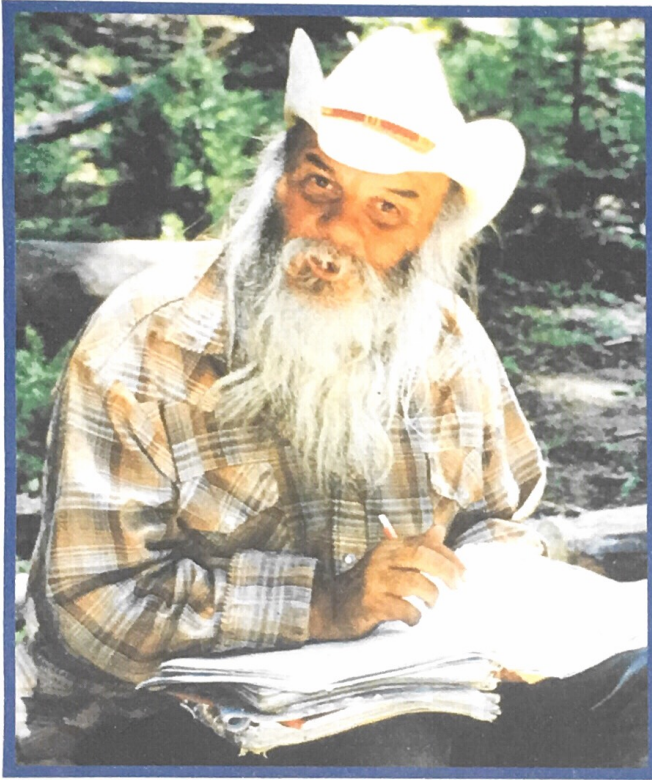




Rainbow Family

Life Stories



*by Jodey Bateman.
Interviews with Rainbow
Family of Living Light
folks conducted between
1977 and 2008.*

Scanned in 2018.

*Jodey Bateman may be
contacted on Facebook.*

or jodey.bateman@yahoo.com

05. I

FEATHER "Herstory"

[3 of 4]

14 pages

[05. I]

When our baby was born, he came into the world very calmly and quietly without any struggle or pain. He was just lifted from my body. The first thing he did was look deeply into my eyes and somehow I felt that he was a very ancient and holy spirit. The recovery from the Caesarian was very slow and painful, but our baby was strong and healthy and hadn't contracted the herpes.

We named him Shawn White Cloud. That came from White Feather and Red Cloud. He had incredibly deep, deep blue eyes that seemed to touch me soul to soul. He was always very calm and almost serious. When he was six weeks old, we took him in for his checkup and he was perfect. That night we went to Grasshopper's school carnival. I fell asleep right away when we got home. I woke up very early, just as the first light was coming into the sky. Where Shawn was lying next to me, it was wet and cold from my milk, which had leaked out because he didn't wake up for his feeding. I knew he was gone. I knew I hadn't rolled over on him or suffocated him. We called a good friend of ours who was a doctor and he came over immediately and told us that he had died of crib death and he explained that there was no cure for it, no way to detect it and it was a completely unsolved medical mystery as to what exactly happened.

Jay Sun's folks, his sister and a friend of mine from Wheeler's named Peggy were visiting us at the time. Peggy took care of Shawn's body and wrapped him naked in a white blanket that had been handmade for him with a pattern of 200 Buddhas. Jay Sun and I went out to dig the grave in a very special place. I sat on the boulder at the foot of the grave to the west, and my milk flowed while I cried. Jay Sun made a beautiful cedar coffin and we had a beautiful ceremony. Grasshopper read from Jonathan Livingston Seagull - she took it really well. We offered prayers from the Rainbow Oracle. I felt very grateful for our deep faith in God.

and knew that the grief I felt was my material attachment because I knew Shawn was all right. The next day we did some good acid and walked up on the Indian burial mound where we had been married. The sagebrush became our ally and we sat facing each other in the lotus position with our foreheads touching. I left my body and flew spiraling over the mound, traveling with the pure spirits of the ancient ones who lived around the Indian mound. Also flying with these ancient ones was the spirit of our son Shawn. He was very luminous with a purple aura, and we knew he was safe and his spirit fulfilling its destiny. The spirit came in the form of a bird and gave Jay Sun the message that birds return in the spring. When we got back to the house that night, my folks called and we were happy to tell them everything was all right.

Even though I knew spiritually that everything was fine, I had a hard time handling my emotional and physical grief. Jay Sun was working and Grasshopper at school, so I was alone a lot of the time and I spent a lot of the time walking by his grave.

One day about six weeks after Shawn White Cloud had passed, Jay Sun went to work and came home after an hour saying the rancher he worked for wasn't there. I had been crying as usual, but suddenly I felt the presence of a very light, happy, energetic kind of spirit. It sort of felt like sunlight. I believe the spirit enters right at the moment of conception. Jay Sun and I made love. All that day I felt that presence and somehow happy. Nine months later, Shawn was born - again - and we had a completely natural child birth in the hospital. My doctor stood up to the whole obstetrics staff to try and to a natural delivery so soon after a Caesarian. But the birth was really beautiful.

with no problems and Jay Sun was there through the whole thing and helped me immensely with my breathing and centering.

We named this baby Shawn Blue Skies and his personality is just like the way I perceived him at conception. I don't know if he's the same spirit as Shawn White Cloud, but it doesn't matter. We went through a whole heavy trip about whether to have Shawn Blue Skies circumcised. We decided not. Shawn White Cloud had been circumcised and he had all that pain and then such a short life. When Shawn Blue Skies was four for a while he wanted to be circumcised because his daddy and his best friend were circumcised.

When Shawn was eight weeks old, we moved to the Jemez Valley to a 100 year old adobe house that hadn't been lived in for 40 years. The walls were two feet thick and had an incredible labyrinth of tunnels through them where a huge family of rats lived. We finally had to poison the rats and they died in the walls next to the fire place, the only warm place in the house. It was winter. There wasn't any door when we moved in. There was no glass in the windowpanes. Jay Sun made a door and covered the windows with plastic.

Jay Sun got a job working on geothermal drilling rigs on Redondo Peak. It was a hard winter, but we have a lot of fond memories of that place. In the spring Jay Sun quit working on the rigs and we left our house and went to work in the woods thinning trees. I never thinned. I stacked the trees that Jay Sun cut and sometimes I used the chain saw on trees I was stacking to cut branches off and make them easier to stack.

Then we went to the 1975 Arkansas Gathering. It took us three days after we got to Arkansas to find the gathering site. Grasshopper almost got arrested at the gathering. She was down at the sweat lodge when the sheriff and

His posse came and took five people to jail. So a lot of people split. Those of us who stayed got really tight with each other. We met Grey Eagle at the Arkansas Gathering for the first time. He had been a Freedom Rider. He thought that if the sheriff came in on us again, every body should get naked and put the women and children in the center of the circle and the men and some of the strongest sisters should stand outside.

Pip had the idea for us to go in a caravan to ^{Stillwater,} Oklahoma, because there had been a tornado there and he thought there would be a lot of jobs roofing. After the gathering, at the cleanup, we held a council and decided we couldn't leave Arkansas until we had gotten our five people out of jail. So we decided to take the whole caravan, which consisted of a couple of school buses, Uncle Ben and Green Banana and various trucks, campers and VW buses to the town of Yellville, Arkansas. We bought a bunch of big garbage bags and started walking around the town picking up the trash. We talked with all the folks and invited them to a supper on the edge of town. The pile of trash we picked up was piled up against the wall of a building as high as the roof.

While we were picking up garbage, I was carrying Shawn on my back in a back pack and someone in that town turned me in for child neglect. The cops spoke with me about it and they were real nice. I explained I was on my way back to the camp to prepare for dinner.

It was supposed to be a spaghetti supper, but we didn't have enough money to buy spaghetti, so it turned out to be rice and vegetables. Quite a

Few townspeople came up to the camp that evening, but many of them stayed in their cars in the shadows. Jayson asked the town marshal why they wouldn't come over and join us, and the marshal said he was amazed that they were there at all, that they had never seen anything like us. He said that the year before, they couldn't even have the senior prom at the high school because kids weren't allowed to dance.

So it only took two days to get our five people out of jail and we got them all out for free. When it was time to leave, folk from the town, including the town marshal, were asking us to stay. It turned out that the sheriff who had raided the gathering controlled the local media and had been pulling a power trip in that county for years.

Because of our presence and interaction, a lot of people were beginning to see through the sheriff's trip. But it was time for us to go, so we headed out, stopping every ten miles or so to put another quart of oil in the Green Banana bus. The whole trip was quite a movie, but we managed to make it to Lake Carl Blackwell, outside of Stillwater, Oklahoma. We had a nice camp at the lake. We just had one tipi, the old patched brown one that was a medicine lodge at the Arkansas Gathering. Some folks went into town and got jobs and went into town for a regular dumpster run for vegetables.

One night the energy was really high and some folks stayed up drumming till early in the morning and peyote finally came. We did a peyote meeting the next night and after the meeting, we swam in the lake by the moonlight and it was really perfect. There was only one other child my daughter Grasshopper's age - 10 or 11 - and it was getting fall, so we were getting

homesick for New Mexico.

Many of the Family stayed in Stillwater, Jaysun, ⁸⁰¹ Grasshopper, Shawn and I went back to Reserve, New Mexico. Freedom and Barbara and Jennifer, her daughter came with us and we rented a funky old house. There wasn't much work to be found, so we ended up doing tree thinning contracts and tried to structure them on a co-operative basis as best we could. After three months, we got a home base out of Luna, New Mexico. We liked thinning cause we would live out in the woods and play music around the fire every night. We had a beautiful sweat lodge set up where Giliwa and Turkey Creeks come together. We used to take sweats every Sunday.

One day Bob, who was thinning with us, caught a trout with his bare hands and everybody had a piece of it. We rationalized that thinning was good for the forest and hoped that in 20 years the forest wouldn't be logged. In thinning you are killing thousands of live trees a day and that's pretty heavy karma.

In early March, 1976, the day after Grasshopper and Jaysun's birthday - they're on the same day - we left Grasshopper and Shawn with neighbor friends and hitch hiked to Kalispel, Montana. The day before we got to Montana, Jaysun came down with some ^{horrible} flu. I got the flu. On the very last ride to Barry and Sunny's door, I started sniffing. I had the flu for a month. We had gathered at Barry and Sunny's along with Garrick and Chuck Windson and Hamar and Mitch. We had gotten together for a meeting with government officials and the Blackfoot Indian tribe.

about the coming gathering. We wanted to have the gathering in the Belly River of Glacier National Park. The odds were about ten to one on their side at the meeting. There were 12 of us. Each government agency said no, one after the other, some more adamantly than others. But we all had a good time anyway. We made contact with the editor of the Kalispell newspaper. He was great. He came over to visit us the next day, and he got a chance to speak to each of us, and to old Pop, a retired logger who lived next door to Barry and Sunny. Before the editor had come, he had been dead set against us having the gathering in Glacier Park. When he left, he shook everybody's hand and Sunny invited him to come to dinner soon and he said he would do everything he could to get us the right to hold the gathering in Montana, but not on the Belly River.

The next night, we had a dinner at Barry and Sunny's Mennonite neighbors, the Kaufmans. They had written a 1,500 word letter to the local newspaper in support of the Rainbow people that they had met. We loved the Kaufmans instantly when we met them. Their kids, too. We had a really great trip back home to New Mexico and met a lot of very fine people on the road. We even had a ride with a very straight businessman with a three-piece suit and a brand-new Volvo. He said he had never picked up a hitch hiker in his life, but he had some strange impulses to pick us up. We had a very deep conversation, and I hope, shed a little light in his life.

When we got home, many folks had been arriving from the Spring Equinox Gathering at Eden, Arizona. About 35 people showed up in the middle of a blizzard for a pre-Rainbow Gathering council. We had some really high circles and shared a lot of stories and news of the coming gathering.

In April I was pregnant and Jay's in wanted me to have an abortion. The doctor didn't like hippies, so the

(111)

abortion hurt a lot.

That spring, we started doing tree thinning contracts again and ended up being stuck with one we didn't expect to get, and at the last minute, we couldn't go to the Montana Gathering. It was really hard to miss the gathering that summer. We felt bad about missing it. I almost left and hitch hiked up there with my kids.

We started the first meeting for the New Mexico Gathering in Santa Fe in October, 1976, with Joseph Rumberg, head of the Park Service for the northern United States, and the Christ Brotherhood. Red Dave and Dominic were there. At that very first meeting, we suggested the site on the east fork of the Gila River, and they said that was the site they had been considering too. It was quite a change in the relationship with the government since 1972. That meeting seemed to set the vibe for all the negotiations with the government about the New Mexico Gathering.

We walked the site at the beginning of December, 1976, with Vic Jenkins, head Ranger of Beaverhead Ranger Station. There was just a little bit of snow on the ground. I felt overwhelmed by the peacefulness and purity of the vibrations there. We saw a large bald eagle take off from a cottonwood tree. From that moment, there was never any question of an alternate site.

Vic, the ranger, had received a huge report from Montana about the gathering which eased his mind and gave him an inkling of what we were all about. In January, 1977, we had a get-together and the public relations man for the Forest Service and a couple of other people. They were all really interested and really wanted to be helpful.

At this point, the public relations man, Ron Henderson, started getting really excited and said "and then we can..." There was silence in the room, because he was saying we, not us and them. It struck everybody that we really were trying to work together and co-operate to have this gathering beautiful without hassles.

A friend of a friend of ours came up for dinner one night. We had about 15 or 20 people for dinner. After a couple of hours, he mentioned that he was a reporter for the Silver City Enterprise. He was a real brother and wrote a very positive and described the prayer circle that we had that night before dinner.

At the end of February, 1977, we went up to Oregon for the Walton Council at the Walton Schoolhouse, 15 miles out of Eugene. It's a free school. A brother named Ramakosha said we could use it for a council about alternative energy and all kinds of other things. Garrick and Barry got it to gether for people to come to Walton from all over and give presentations on what they were doing from the Northwest mostly. Jay Sun and I were the ones from furthest away. The Ho-Dads were there, the Love Family was there, the Mountain Grove Commune Family and so forth.

It was really constructive. There was a nice little kitchen going, people contributed food, brothers and sisters managed the kid city. We had a council circle going on. It got kind of long-winded and dry at times.

Phil Coyote wanted Jay Sun and me to make the announcement of the gathering and felt it was being held up by all these people rapping about organic beets and stuff. He would walk out of the council and let everybody know he was displeased. Antoinette No Guns was there. She gave a Mother's vision. She was very radical and very unaccepting of where other people were at. At the same time, she did a good job of calling other people's bullshit, though she couldn't recognize her own

bullshit. She's a far out sister. I love her a lot. But she's
fanatical.

It caused a certain amount of fervor between her and Phil Coyote
and Bear. A lot of people got bummed out and left. Garrick got
pretty fed up with Phil Coyote and No Guns' attitudes and
let them know he thought they were being disrespectful.

Jay Sun and I stayed until the last clean up and then
went over to Barry's and worked on the invitation to the New
Mexico Gathering. At first Sunny didn't want to let Bear
into his house. But Barry talked Sunny into letting him in
if he didn't blow it again.

We printed the invitations in a brother's house. He used to
print for the SDS. We had a good stay for a few days and then
headed back to New Mexico. When we printed the invites,
we went ahead and printed the dates we wanted to have
the gathering on, although the Forest Service hadn't said
it was cool yet. Next time we had a meeting with the
Forest Service and the press, they were a little bit up
tight about that and felt we were trying to put something
over on them. We explained that we could only speak as
members of the council.

We spent quite a bit of time going around and talking
to some of the local landowners surrounding the site
at neighboring ranches. Some students from Nebraska
Wesleyan, a heavy Christian college, were supposed to
study biology at Trail's End Ranch, just south
of the gathering site and they freaked out when they
found the gathering was happening. Out of 20 students
who were supposed to come, only six did. The professors
wrote their congressman and asked him to stop
the gathering. They had this image of their poor,
innocent students being corrupted.

We wanted to meet with Trail's End, but the Forest Service didn't want us to. But the Forest Service couldn't give the Trail's End Ranch people the assurance they needed. They showed the ranchers a totally misleading bulletin that said that although the Rainbow Family does not advocate the use of weapons, that there are weapons at every gathering.

The Forest Service offered to provide armed guards to protect the ranchers. If they thought that would allay the ranchers, they found they did just the opposite. So we went to meet with the Trail's End Ranch people. We just fell in love with them. After we met with them, their fears were allayed, and we felt a lot of mutual respect and understanding.

There were a lot of folks staying at our house in April getting ready for the gathering, and I was really feeling the need to get off by myself for a couple of days, so I just grabbed a sleeping bag and some sprouts. I headed out hitching down the highway. The second car that came by was an old Volkswagen bug with a brother driving who reminded me of Ram Das. He dropped me off near Reserve and headed on his way to Las Cruces. I sat down and lit up a joint and about two miles later, he came back and said something real cosmic like "The Spirit wills for you to go to Beaver head and I'm gonna take you there."

His name was Terry. He is a really beautiful brother. He had been a backwoods forest ranger for ten years - one of those that goes off in the woods on a mule for a couple of weeks at a time. He gave me a ride about 100 miles on dirt road. We sat and meditated at sunset, and it was really far out to be with a brother who could relate to me as a person on a spiritual level. He had been celibate for the past three years.

He dropped me off right where the trail was to drop off to the gathering site. It was kind of drizzling that night, so I slept out in an arroyo. Then I hiked to the place where the bakery and the sprout kitchen were to be. I stayed there for two days and slept above a

cave. The first night, I tried to sleep in that cave and I couldn't. I felt real strongly the spirit who had been there before. And I didn't want to be where I couldn't see the stars.

I Fasted for three days and did a lot of praying and thanking the Lord for all the beauty. I didn't see a soul. And on the third morning, which was Sunday, I dropped some really good acid at sunrise. I sat in the pool of the spring, meditating on the trees and birds. It was like making love to the trees. It was like sitting in the womb of the Mother. It was really holy.

I was sitting with my eyes closed and I felt an energy pulling me, and I looked up just as a pair of bald eagles flew over my head. They didn't make a sound. I just felt them. I felt so much joy in my heart. I was getting ready for the gathering.

A little before sunset, I started hiking out of the site. I got about halfway up the hill and met that brother Terry the ranger walking down. I was still really stoned. My pack was hurting me, rubbing me raw. Terry had already found the cave and been there looking for me. I had left it completely clean except for a little fire circle. He brought me a little cantelope and we sat there and watched the sunset. We shared the cantelope, which was a fine way to break a fast, and then we drove back to the house. Jayson and Terry and I sat together for a long time.

Kilo came to the gathering site at the beginning of June, before the permit began, to set up the Scarcity Camp. He broke in on the site in the name of the Rainbow Family, got drunk, wrecked a truck, punched Richard or Richard and Michelle. But by the time of the gathering, everything had mellowed out.

Dr. Mac came to the gathering. He said he was one of the medics who had taken a brother with a broken

back out of the 1972 Colorado Gathering in a helicopter. It turned out he wasn't there. He said he was into psychic surgery and gave a big rope. A sister named Mohave had an ^{accident} carriage. Someone had slipped her some jimson weed. It was Dr. Mac's decision with sunny that Mohave should go out of the gathering. Doctor Mac split the gathering. There was a question whether he was a doctor at all. It was never resolved.

Sunny, Candy and I and Michael Sun stayed up with the people at the gathering who were tripping on jimson weed one night. Someone had to be with them or they would hurt themselves. They said they saw little people like Hopi kachina dolls. It could have been the spirits of the Indians who had lived there. I sat with one sister on jimson weed who said she was shown the Devil and the depths of hell.

Sitting with them, they were speaking in another language, very fast, and their movements were very erratic. Gradually around morning they started slowing down and eventually we realized they had been speaking English, only very staccato and not with the usual inflection. They seemed to be talking to other people. It was like speaking in tongues. The sister who had seen hell got up at council two days later and said maybe God had meant her to go through that so she would see how horrible it was and be able to tell the brothers and sisters so they wouldn't have to use jimson weed to see for themselves. The bad times and the heavy times are lessons.

We brought four buckets to the gathering and they all got broken when the tree caught on fire and all the buckets kept being thrown down the cliff for more water. But Grasshopper was really happy to be in the water brigade part of putting out the fire.

After the gathering, we caravanned to the Peace Camp near Velarde, New Mexico. I really enjoyed the Velarde experience,

getting to know Zack and Melody and Tibor and Ferenc and many others. While we were there, we went down to show how Arizona to rescue Barry and Sunny's Buffalo bus. It was an amazing experience. Sunny and I worked at a Pizzeria that in show how to make money to pay for bus repair and for food. We didn't get our pay checks for two months, so all of us - four adults and two children - had to live off my tips, except for some money Jayson and Barry made as mechanics and at odd jobs.

We got the bus back together again and eventually headed for Oregon to Rainbow Farm. We helped harvest at the farm and eventually got involved in the Trojan nuclear plant occupation after Thanksgiving, 1977. We brought sacks of organic vegetables from Rainbow Farm for the kitchen at the occupation and some food co-ops gave miso and brewer's yeast and we made big kettles of soup.

Our bus was like headquarters where people could come get some hot tea or a bowl of soup and a place to sleep out of the rain for a little while. We were organized into affinity groups of demonstrators and supporters. Decisions were made by each affinity group holding council and deciding what they wanted and choosing a speaker to represent them in the main council.

There were 123 people who got arrested. Jayson and I parked our bus right outside the chain link fence at the Fairgrounds, where every body was being held. There were too many prisoners to fit in the jail. Jayson and I were supporters doing necessary work for the demonstrators like contact with the media. A lot of the media people came in our bus. Some of the movement leaders were there too. They couldn't be arrested because they had been arrested before in the summer and couldn't be